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## The Lobbyist No. 23 (October 1998)

Maine Women's Lobby Staff

*Maine Women's Lobby*

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Linda Tarr-Whelan, President and CEO of the Center for Policy Alternatives and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nation's Commission on the Status of Women talks to participants about moving a women-led economic agenda.



a publication of the  
**MAINE  
WOMEN'S  
LOBBY**  
and the Women's  
Development Institute

## GRASSROOTS LEADERS BUILD ALLIANCES IN PORTLAND

by Liz Keith

Portland was in the nation's eye July 31-August 2, when women from across the country gathered for the Grassroots Leadership Retreat, co-hosted by the Center for Policy Alternatives, the Rockefeller Family Fund, and the Maine Women's Lobby and Women's Development Institute. Seventy-five women economic leaders from 30 states and the District of Columbia rolled up their sleeves and spent three days developing strategies to protect and promote women's economic rights.

The kick-off event for the weekend was a reception at Portland City Hall. Approximately 150 retreat participants, Maine legislators, and women representing Maine organizations were warmly welcomed by Portland Mayor Tom Kane. Senate Majority Leader Chellie Pingree spoke about her experiences as a Flemming Fellow at the Center for Policy Alternatives and introduced Linda Tarr-Whelan, President and CEO of CPA and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nation's Commission on the Status of Women. Tarr-Whelan presented CPA's Women and the Economy Campaign, a national effort to help women recognize their economic power and economic potential.

The women attending the retreat later said that one of the highlights of the weekend was meeting legislators and women from Maine organizations. It was a terrific opportunity to showcase our state and people were especially impressed that so many people from Maine cared enough to participate in an event that was held on a beautiful Friday evening in July.

Maine was also spotlighted in a workshop on the Women's Economic Security Project (WESP), a campaign spearheaded by WDI that was designed to shift the debate surrounding welfare reform from stereotypes about women's behavior to the status of women in the economy. Panelists included WDI Executive Director Laura Fortman and WDI Board Vice-Chair Sandy Butler, co-author of *Struggling to Make Ends Meet in the Maine Economy*, a WDI publication. WESP played a key role in preventing the popular but punitive welfare reform measures that many of the retreat participants are battling in their states.

More on Retreat ~ Page 2

## CHOICE UPDATE

Many thanks to members who have gathered signatures for our statement in support of women's rights and privacy. Please keep the petitions coming! We are using the names to develop a legislative action database that will be crucial in mobilizing public support for Choice issues.

The debate over the so-called "partial birth" abortion ban is intensifying. On September 17, Family Planning Association of Maine, the Maine Civil Liberties Union, Planned Parenthood and the Maine Women's Lobby placed a half page ad in the Portland Press Herald thanking Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins for sustaining President Clinton's veto of the so-called "partial birth" abortion ban. If you haven't already called to thank them for this, please do so now:  
Senator Olympia Snowe: (202) 224-5344  
Senator Susan Collins: (202) 224-2523

The Maine Interfaith Council for Reproductive Choice, a group of pro-choice Christian, Jewish and Unitarian Universalist clergy, sponsored a recent conference on protecting choice in Maine, called "Claming the Center for Choice." The Council encompasses diverse faith perspectives and strives to educate congregations and the larger community about the morality of reproductive choices; to affirm women as moral agents in making reproductive decisions; and to promote public policy that guarantees reproductive freedom. "Reproductive decisions must continue to belong to each woman, rooted in her moral code and drawing upon whomever she wishes to consult," said Rev. John McCall of South Portland, "As a society, we must ask whether abortions are so common because women are otherwise denied justice; left economically dependent and destitute; forced into roles and responsibilities others choose for them." For more info write the MICRC at P.O. Box 127, Augusta, ME, 04332. For more information, call Joanne D'Arcangelo at 622-3477.





(from page 1 Grassroots Leadership Retreat)  
MWL staff person Liz Keith and other Retreat participants at a plenary on message development and media strategies.

The Retreat itself gave grassroots leaders an opportunity to collaborate across state lines and develop strategies on economic policies that impact women, families and communities. The areas of concern were entrepreneurship, economic self-sufficiency, health and security, and family and work. Within those areas, the following key agenda items surfaced:

**Entrepreneurship:**

*Revitalizing states, inner cities, and rural areas with the energy of women entrepreneurs by linking lending to learning and ensuring that women gain the skills they need to succeed.*

**Economic self-sufficiency:**

*Make education and skills training for welfare recipients and other low-wage workers the key to self-sufficiency.*

**Health and Security:**

*Assure comprehensive, responsive, accessible and affordable healthcare for women.*


**Family and Work:**

*Increase quality and access of childcare and after school activities and raise the value we place on caregivers and their wages.*

Spirits were high throughout the weekend as participants formed alliances spanning the country and shared strategies and ideas. The groundwork laid last month will continue throughout the year in policy groups and in next year's retreat, which plans to bring in even more of the nation's innovative and visionary women leaders.

**OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH**

If you or a women you know or love over fifty can't afford a mammogram call the Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program at 1-800-350-8180, TTY 287-8015.



# BREAK THE ULTIMATE GLASS CEILING: ELECT A WOMAN PRESIDENT

By: Corey Hascall, MWL/WDI intern

Recent polls have indicated that 76% of Americans would be willing to vote for a female presidential candidate. Why then the absence of women in the race for president? The White House Project, a nonpartisan public awareness campaign, has undertaken the job of putting forth qualified women candidates from varying backgrounds for president and other important elected offices.

The concept behind The White House Project was conceived by Marie Wilson, president of the Ms. Foundation for Women, Laura Liswood, vice chair of Harvard University's Council of Women World Leaders and Barbara Lee, an activist from Boston. The campaign's main goal is to make the thought of a woman president so commonplace that we elect a woman by the end of the next decade.

The White House Project's national grassroots kickoff began on September 27th when the list of 20 possible women candidates were released to the public. Between September 27th and November 15th, Americans will be able to select 5 candidates from this ballot whom they believe would qualify to run for public office. The White House Project will then release the top five names after they have been tabulated. There are a few ways that people can cast their votes through this Ballot Box Initiative:

- \*Via The White House Project's web site ([www.thewhitehouseproject.org](http://www.thewhitehouseproject.org))
  - \*By calling 1-900-288-6881
  - \*By looking for ballots in upcoming editions of Parade, People, Glamour, Essence, Jane, and Latina magazines (ballots must be postmarked by November 15th).
- Senator Olympia Snowe will be on the list, along with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, Senator Dianne Feinstein of California, and 16 other women who might be "presidential material."

**TAKE ACTION AGAINST  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

By: Dorothy Chocensky, MCFCS member services coordinator

This year, as in years past, October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Throughout the nation, battered women's advocates and their allies will hold events and activities designed to remind the public that domestic violence is everyone's concern.

Here in Maine, the member projects of the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services (MCFCS) will hold vigils, marches, discussions, and ceremonies to raise awareness, celebrate peace, and commemorate those who have lost their lives at the hands of intimate partners or family members.

Of course, awareness is not enough. What can you do to help? Let your community know that you will not tolerate violence, whether out in public or behind closed doors. Join a march; light a candle; call your local project to volunteer for a one-time event; or make a long-term commitment and become a hotline volunteer.

For more information on the project in your county, call the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services at 207-941-1194 or e-mail us at [mcfcs@agate.net](mailto:mcfcs@agate.net).



## **Abortion: Current Maine Law**

### **Maine's Reproductive Privacy Act (MRSA 22 Sec. 1598, subsection 1)**

"It is the public policy of the State that the State not restrict a woman's exercise of her private decision to terminate a pregnancy before viability except as provided in section 1597-a. After viability an abortion may be performed only when it is necessary to preserve the life or health of the mother. It is also the public policy of the State that all abortions may be performed only by a physician."

### **About the Abortion Procedure Ban**

The initiative asks: "Do you want to ban a specific abortion procedure to be defined in state law except in cases where the life of the mother is in danger?"

- Late term abortions in Maine are exceedingly rare: in the fourteen years from 1984 through 1997, only two (2) third trimester abortions were performed in Maine.
- The abortion procedure ban violates Roe v. Wade and Maine's Reproductive Privacy Act because it fails to provide an exception for cases in which a woman's health is threatened.

### **An Urgent Call to Members: Now is the Time to Get Involved!**

We need your energy, skills and enthusiasm to help defeat the ban and preserve access to safe, legal abortion service. Please contact us if you would be willing to:

\_\_\_ Organize a house party. This issue can be a difficult subject to talk about. Get five or six friends and neighbors together to discuss the issue and build skills to respond to it -- we'll provide a speaker and materials!

\_\_\_ Make phone calls to other pro-choice Mainers;

Help us send a message that Mainers are positively pro-choice - gather signatures for our statement in support of women's reproductive rights and privacy! We know you're committed to choice, but we need you to talk to five of your friends who are not necessarily Lobby members. Please have them sign the petition on the other side of this sheet and then return it to us. If you can gather more signatures, feel free to attach an additional sheet or call us for more.

## Protect the Future of Choice in Maine

**I firmly and positively support a woman's right to reproductive choice and privacy, and will actively work against legislation that puts women's lives and health at risk and violates their constitutional rights. Furthermore, I support policies that address the root causes of unintended pregnancy, including access to health care, sexuality education, insurance coverage for contraceptives, and funding for family planning services.**

**If there is a ballot initiative to restrict access to safe, legal abortion procedures in November 1999, I pledge to go the the polls and vote "No."**

Date	Name	Address	Phone	Email
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[illegible]

**These pledges were collected by:**

**Mail this petition to: The Maine Women's Lobby, P.O. Box 15, Hallowell, ME 04347. Ph. 622-0851; email MWomenL@aol.com**



# UPDATE ON THE COMMISSION ON EATING DISORDERS

by Lauren Grousd, MWL/WDI Intern



In April of 1998, Chapter 118, Resolve, to Establish the Commission on Eating Disorders was approved by the Maine legislature. The Commission is made up of 19 members whose goal is to study methods of education, treatment, and support services for those with eating disorders and their families. The members of the Commission include employees of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, along with representatives from the Department of Human Services, the Department of Education, service providers, people with eating disorders, and other members of the community. Representative Joe Brooks (D-Winterport) and Representative Lois Snowe-Mello (R-Poland) are the co-chairs of the Commission.

So far, the Commission has had several meetings and will complete its work by December 1998. Three subcommittees have been created: 1) Prevention/Outreach/Public Education, 2) Health Services/Treatment Needs and Issues, and 3) Support Networks/Services. The goals of the Commission include gathering information about the scope of existing services and treatment in Maine, increasing public awareness about the issue, expanding preventive services, and broadening treatment options for people with eating disorders.

Early Commission findings indicate that although there are some support and treatment services available in Maine, these services are scattered across the state; thus making it difficult for

many people who need care to receive professional treatment and support.

The Commission will be gathering the most recent medical information about anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, as well as contacting national organizations such as the 22-year-old National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Eating Disorders (ANAD). Groups such as ANAD will be used to identify "best practice" models for education, prevention, support groups, and treatment options.

*Anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa effect the lives of millions of people in the United States each year. 1 in 10 cases leads to death through cardiac arrest, starvation, or suicide.*

Anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa effect the lives of millions of people in the United States each year. 1 in 10 cases leads to death through cardiac arrest, starvation, or suicide. Thanks to the recent attention given to eating disorders as a health problem, many young women have been correctly diagnosed and have begun to receive the treatment they need to heal. Unfortunately, there are still many others who fall through the cracks. The Commission on Eating Disorders is an important first step to identifying ways that Maine can improve its treatment and support services for those who suffer from eating disorders in our state.

## NOVEMBER 3 IS ELECTION DAY!

By: Corey Hascall

The next statewide election will take place on November 3rd to elect a Governor, U.S. Representatives, State Representatives, County Officials, and to decide referenda questions. To ensure that we have a voice in the decision making process that directly affects us and our children, it's important that as many women vote as possible. Fortunately, registering to vote is simple. Registration cards can be filled out at your local town office, any Motor Vehicle Branch Office, or at any voter registration drive. One new option open to the public is voter registration on line (<http://register2vote.org>) at a site called "Register America". Once a downloaded registration questionnaire is completed, a signature card will be sent to you to sign and send in to the Secretary of State. There is no deadline to register for the November 3rd election so you may even register on that day.

## MWL / WDI WELCOME NEW STAFF AND INTERNS

Ever wonder how we get so much done? We'd never be able to do it without the help of our committed and enthusiastic interns. MWL and WDI welcome two new interns, Lauren Grousd, a recent graduate of Bowdoin College, and Corey Hascall, who is pursuing degrees in Political Science and Women's Studies at USM. This summer Lauren compiled a documented history of the Women's Economic Security Project, a campaign that succeeded in maintaining the safety net for Maine families on public assistance after sweeping federal welfare reform. She is now organizing and archiving our press clippings, from which she will develop a more detailed database of our friends and allies in the media. Her work will be instrumental in helping us step up our media outreach efforts.

Corey will be an intern for the entire school year. Currently, she is helping with the Women's Leadership Project and will work on special projects and events throughout the year. She brings extensive telemarketing skills to the Lobby, so it may be her voice at the other end of the Lobby telephone when you call!

We're always looking for interns to work on various projects during the summer and school year. If you know someone who might be interested, please tell them to call the office at 622-0851.


MWL and WDI also welcome a new staff person, Liz Keith. Liz came on board just before the 20th Anniversary Celebration and has been full-time since September. In addition to managing the day-to-day operations of the office, Liz is active in the Women's Leadership Project and is Chair of the Choice Coalition's public education and outreach campaign around the late-term abortion ban. At the end of the July she represented MWL and WDI at ACORN's National Organizers' Summit on Welfare Reform in Milwaukee.





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# OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Did you know . . . Domestic violence affects all facets of a victim's life, including her or his well-being and productivity as a worker. Therefore, domestic violence should be viewed as a workplace issue, as well as a household one.

- *Violence is the #1 cause of physical injury to women.<sup>1</sup>*
- *Homicide is the #1 cause of death for women in the workplace.<sup>2</sup>*
- *According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 8% of rapes occur while the victim is working.<sup>3</sup>*
- *Women are twice as likely as men to be assaulted while at work.<sup>4</sup>*
- *Women are five times as likely as men to be victimized at work by an intimate partner.<sup>5</sup>*
- *Over 50% of women surveyed in one study reported that they were harassed by their abusers at work.<sup>6</sup>*

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Here are some suggestions for making your workplace a safe and supportive one for victims of domestic violence:

- Provide confidential assistance for employees who are victims of domestic violence, and respect her or his right to determine the course of action to be taken.
- Create a fair workplace by providing the same treatment and benefits to victims of violence as to other employees, and treat violence at or from the workplace like other forms of harassment and abuse.
- Inform and educate employees about domestic violence and the community resources available to them.
- Support community efforts to end domestic violence.

\*The above information was supplied by the National Organization for Women Legal Defense and Education Fund. NOW LDEF has been working since 1970 to create equality for women and girls in the workplace, schools, family, and courts through litigation, education, and public information programs. For more information or a copy of their report, *The Impact of Violence in the Lives of Working Women*, call (212) 925-6635.

1 Surgeon General Antonio Novello, "From the Surgeon General, U.S. Public Health Services," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 267, No. 23, at 3132 (June 17, 1992).

2 Bureau of Labor Statistics, "National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 1994." At Table 4 (1995). See also *Hidden Violence Against Women at Work*, Women in Public Service (Fall 1995).

3 U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Violence and Theft in the Workplace" (July 1994).

4 Bureau of Labor Statistics, "National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 1994," at Table 1 (1995).

5 Bureau of Justice Statistics, Ronet Bachman, "Violence and Theft in the Workplace," (July 1994).

6 Melanie Shepard and Ellen Pence, "The Effect of Battering on the Employment Status of Women," *Affilia*, 55, 58, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Summer 1988) (56%).

## BOARD CHAIR FAREWELL

TWO YEARS!! It's hard for me to believe that this much time has passed since I became Chair of the Maine Women's Lobby Board of Directors. And what a great two years it has been! As I prepare to leave the Board I can look back with pride and excitement on our achievements over this time. First, I think about what we've accomplished on "the outside" - those public policy issues that we have researched and the legislative debates that we have fought for and won. The incredible defeat of all nine anti-choice bills in the last session certainly comes to mind.

I also realize what the organization has achieved on "the inside". The Women's Lobby and Women's Development Institute have grown in stature and in strength. We have achieved recognition for the important work that we do on both the state and national levels. The success of our Twentieth Anniversary Celebration in May and being asked to host the National Grassroots Leadership Retreat in August were both great tributes to that recognition. Our organizations are growing; we have increased our staff time and continually manage to get more and more work done on the issues we all care so much about.

Naturally, there is no way the Board of Directors can take most of the credit for this. The reality is that we have an energetic and efficient Board AND an incredible staff, without whom none of this could ever happen. They continually amaze us with their skill, knowledge, passion, and commitment to this important work.

So, what's ahead for us? The answer is, "more than ever"! We will be working on those issues that will continue to improve the lives of women and girls in Maine - Pay Equity; Protection of Choice; Health Care issues, to name just a few. There is so much work yet to be done.

Your support of our organizations has meant a lot to us. It is vital that we continue to increase our membership and raise money for our projects. Although I will no longer be serving on the Board of Directors, I will continue to commit whatever resources I can to help make this happen. I hope you will too!

We've come a long way; let's see how much farther we can go!!

Carol Kelly  
Retiring Board Chair



# LOBBY NOTES

## WORKPLACE GIVING

Many workplace giving plans will allow you to designate pledges to nonprofit organizations that are not among the ones they routinely support. If you are currently giving through the United Way and would like to support the Women's Development Institute, please ask them about writing in WDI as a recipient. MaineShare has also instituted a designated giving option in some workplaces. Please check with your local campaign coordinator about giving to WDI.

## INCORRECT CAPTION

A caption in our August newsletter mistakenly identified Senator Chellie Pingree as the Assistant Senate Majority Leader. Senator Pingree is the Senate Majority Leader.

## LAURA FORTMAN RECEIVES MWLF AWARD

At the recent Maine Women's Fund Evening to Honor Maine Women and Girls MWLF Executive Director was among several women honored for her "extraordinary efforts to empower women and girls with low incomes." Kathy Chaiklin, Sophanny Yin and the staff of the Maine Centers for Women, Work and Community were also honored.

## MWLF VIDEO CABLE ACCESS PREMIERE

If you live in the Greater Portland area, tune in to Portland Public Access TV in October to see the Maine Women's Lobby video, *Persistence and Progress*. It will air every Thursday, starting October 8, at 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m., and 9:00 p.m. The video will be shown on other public access stations around the state throughout the year.

## JOIN US FOR BREAKFAST IN BANGOR!

The theme of this year's Breakfast of Champions is women, jobs and the economy. Did you know:

• Women aged 16 and older comprise nearly 62% of Maine's labor force. In 1990, Maine women working full-time, full-year earned an average of almost \$9,000 less than their male counterparts;

• Nationally, women earn 74 on the dollar compared to men.

The Maine Women's Lobby Breakfast of Champions is taking place Wednesday, October 21, 1998 from 7:15 - 9 am at the Sheraton Four Points, Bangor Airport. Join us for a thought-provoking forum on women, jobs and economy with Bangor area legislators and keynote speaker Sen. Chellie Pingree, co-Chair of the Economic Growth Council. Sen. Pingree will focus her discussion on the latest findings of the Economic Growth Council on women in the Maine Economy. Panelists Sen. Cathcart, Sen. Mitchell, Rep. Sad, Rep. Baker and Rep. Loring will offer their insight on issues ranging from pay equity to education. There will be an opportunity for questions and answers from the audience. We hope you can join us! Call 622-0351 for tickets or more information.

## NEW PROJECT DEVELOPS LEADERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE

by Liz Keith

All too often women feel that important decisions are made in Augusta by lawmakers who don't understand the realities of their lives. The recent struggles to protect access to education during "welfare reform," to raise the minimum wage and to expand healthcare coverage to working parents have taught us an important lesson. It's crucial for women—in particular women who are struggling to make ends meet for their families—to be involved in changing the policies that directly affect their lives.

This fall WDI is conducting the Women's Leadership Project, a statewide training program for low-income women to be active participants in the legislative process. Working in conjunction with the Maine Equal Justice Project and the Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods, we hope to provide low-income women with the support and skills it takes to make change—coalition building, working with the press, talking to legislators, and organizing. Training groups will be formed in four regions: Portland, Augusta, Bangor and Presque Isle; each group will meet four times this fall. The regional groups will come together for a Day at the State House in mid-January to see the legislative process in action and discuss next steps.

The Women's Leadership Project is led by a diverse steering committee of mostly low-income women who describe themselves as "everyday women who are fed up with decisions being made without them and who have taken steps to make change." Since this is the first time the project has taken place, the steering committee has worked from scratch to shape the concept and direction of the project, design the project brochure and application, develop the recruitment and screening process, and design the curriculum. Steering committee members will also lead parts of the training. "My hope is that the Women's Leadership Project will help remind women to vision beyond their individual predicament and learn the steps in the process around making social change," says Keita Whitten, a Steering Committee member and VISTA for Maine Coalition For Food Security.

The Women's Leadership Project is not just about women being involved—it's about women taking the lead. If all goes well, the project will take place annually and will expand to other areas of the state. Our vision is long term: this core group of women plus scores of future participants will have the tools and base of support they need to more effectively participate—and drive—public policy decisions.

For more information about the Women's Leadership Project, call 1-800-291-3110. Thanks to the Maine Women's Fund and the Haymarket People's Fund for funding this endeavor!



## DATES TO REMEMBER:

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Breast Cancer Awareness Month

**October 19 & 20, 1998:** Violence, Trauma and Recovery: Responding to the Impacts of Interpersonal Violence. Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland. The second annual clinical training conference, sponsored by the DMHMRAS Office of Trauma Services and the Center for Learning. Call Linda Kinney, 626-5231, or Becky Pottle, 626-5248, for more information.

**October 21, 1998, 7:15-9 a.m.:** MWL Breakfast of Champions, Sheraton Four Points, Bangor Airport. Join us for a thought-provoking forum with women legislators from the Bangor area on creating an economy that works for women, our families and our communities.

**October 22, 1998:** National Young Women's Day of Action. Organizing kits are available for campus and community groups to organize local actions and speakouts. Call the Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program, Hampshire College at (413) 559-5645 or visit their web site at <http://hamp.hampshire.edu/>.

**October 24, 1998, 8:30 am - 4 pm:** The fourth annual Changing Maine: Finding Common Ground II, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Augusta. Call Larry Dansinger, 535-7776, for a brochure or more information.

**Friday, October 30, "Rethinking Women's Work,"** Part II of USM "Women's Work" Symposium. 3 pm, Lewiston Auburn Campus. Call 780-4862 for details.

**November 3, 1998: ELECTION DAY.** Women comprise the majority of voters in Maine, making us a politically powerful voting bloc. Be sure to make your voice heard on election day by voting for candidates who support issues important to you!

**November 14, 1998:** 13th Annual Maine Women's Studies Conference: How Do We Talk About Families? Myths and Changing Realities. University of Maine at Farmington. Call Lee Sharkey, 778-7387, or Deb Burd, 778-7274, for more information.

**Friday, November 20: "Women and Work: The Future,"** Part III of USM "Women's Work" Symposium. 3 pm, Portland Campus. Call 780-4862 for details.

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*"Optimizing the lives of Maine women and girls through  
public policy development and legislative action."*